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ABSTRACT

Based on recent school effectiveness literature, this paper suggests local policies to stimulate and facilitate school reform. After discussing the goals of the effective schools movement and briefly reviewing the literature, it presents a two-phase model for school improvement projects, based on the premise that a school's culture primarily determines its effectiveness. This model uses relatively simple organizational adjustments to stimulate more organic changes; participative decision-making is recommended to effect these changes. Accordingly, the authors propose that planning proceed from the school level upward, and they offer four general policy recommendations. Subsequent passages discuss the respective roles of the school and the district in a reform program; the applicability of school effectiveness research to secondary schools; the roles of teachers' unions and middle management and of the school board and the superintendent; individual school goals; evaluation methods; and staff development programs. The paper concludes with some observations on school improvement theory and on "institutionalizing" or "routinizing" reforms. (MCG)

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School Reform: The Policy Implications of the Effective Schools Literature

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The Opportunity for Educational Reform

The prospects for educational improvement appear greater now than at any time since the post-Sputnik reform era. This opportunity for change is the result of the convergence of the new literature on school effectiveness and the issuance of several reports on the state of American education.[1] While the latter are generally critical of the nation's schools, the former attempts to identify the characteristics of exemplary schools.[2] Providentially, the reports criticizing education in the United States have focused public attention on schools and the need for change at precisely the time when over a decade of research suggests means by which this change might be accomplished. In this paper we will briefly review findings from the school effectiveness literature and, based on that literature, suggest local strategies and policies that will stimulate and facilitate school reform. In a second paper we will suggest state and federal policies that complement these local strategies and policies.

Genuine reform, however, is predicated on finding solutions to relatively complex problems and devising policies that will implant those solutions across the spectrum of schools that comprise public education. There are not now, as there have never been, simple answers to the questions of what is wrong with our schools and how they can be changed. The "window of opportunity" opened by the education reports and the school effectiveness literature will lead to a higher quality education only to the extent that the hard issues facing schools are not ignored or turned into simplistic policy recipes.

One such issue concerns the nature of the specific changes that must take place if school improvement is to occur. Time emerges as a key factor in many current analyses. Not illogically, it has been suggested that the more time students spend engaged in learning, the more knowledge or skills they are likely to acquire. Hence, teachers are instructed to increase the amount of student "time on task" and schools are advised to lengthen the school day, the school year, or both.[3] Unfortunately, time on task may not be strongly and equally significant for all types of students or across all subject areas (Karweit, 1982). Curriculum content often is ignored by time-on-task research, and if the subject matter is trivial or unchallenging "more" is not better.[4] Furthermore, if instruction is inefficient or inappropriate, the time spent, regardless of the content, may be unproductive. Similar objections can be raised about recommendations concerning the length of school. Marginal students already alienated by school are not likely to undergo a rebirth of interest due to a longer day or year. More time in school is essentially meaningless unless linked to curriculum reform. Teacher burnout, which is not due solely to low pay and low esteem, may not be helped by more school and will almost certainly be accelerated by longer days or years that are not accompanied by substantial increases in pay. While time may indeed be a relevant element, the process and content of education must be considered as well. In this instance, as in others, the question of what is wrong in schools is not amenable to simple policy solutions.

A second issue has to do with the process of change and the determination of policies that will result in the successful implementation of proposed innovations. In resolving this issue, policy

makers must address questions such as: What is the appropriate mechanism for promoting across-the-board school improvement that remains sensitive to often profound differences among schools? How can teachers and school administrators be invested with a feeling of "ownership" and commitment to mandates for school improvement that originate outside of the school? Who will participate, and at what level of responsibility, in decision making concerning the content and form of school reform?

As we will discuss more fully later, recent research addresses these questions by suggesting that lasting change seeking to affect student achievement is more likely to result from policies that encourage bottom-up, school-specific reform efforts. Grass-roots change such as this requires a participatory approach to school improvement that relies upon faculty collaboration and shared decision making. Of necessity this type of change will involve education associations or teacher unions as school staffs debate their positions on whether to lengthen the school day, the criteria for evaluating teacher competence and school effectiveness, transfer and seniority rights, and so on. In this situation, therefore, can policies work that, like differential pay proposals, are vehemently opposed by teacher groups?

There are not easy answers to questions such as these, but these are precisely the kind of questions that must be addressed if genuine reform is to be achieved. It is our contention throughout that this relatively new literature suggests areas for school improvement and directions for change that illuminate both the content and process necessary for raising the quality of education.

The Effective Schools Movement: Cautious Optimism

The school effectiveness literature suggests that programmatic and/or structural changes at the school level can produce an environment that leads to academic success on the part of those students who, due to the social and economic position of their families, have tended as a group to score below the norm on standardized tests in basic skill areas such as mathematics, reading, and writing ability. Some summaries of the literature emphasize a critical list of variables that must be implemented in order for a school to be effective (e.g., Austin, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980). Our view is that the situation is more complex (Purkey & Smith, 1983). We see a school's effectiveness as largely due to the culture of the school, its values and official rules, the behavior of its staff and students, their expectations for work and achievement, and so forth. This culture can positively influence all students, especially low income pupils who may not be exposed elsewhere to an environment that is supportive of academic success.

In turn this new literature has given rise to what has become a school effectiveness movement. According to the Education Commission of the States, at least eight states[5] have incorporated the findings of the effective schools literature into their school improvement policies and a number of other states have adopted aspects of the literature for their improvement programs (Odden & Dougherty, 1982). Miles, Farrar, and Neufeld (1983, p. 7) located 39 effective schools projects operating in 25 states and covering 875 school districts. Fruchter (1982) identified six states and four major cities that have initiated school

effectiveness projects.[6] Other projects that fall within this movement can be found elsewhere.[7]

Though educational panaceas have risen many times in the past (remember open education, individualized education, behavioral objectives, team teaching?), the effective schools movement differs in several important respects.

First, it emphasizes that whatever else schools can and should accomplish, their primary purpose is instructional. Whether the subject is math, European history, home economics, or auto mechanics, success is measured by how well the student masters the knowledge or skill of that discipline. Second, the school provides the overall environment in which instruction occurs and learning takes place. Third, schools are to be treated as organic units--improvement strategies that fragment the school's population or instructional program are unlikely to be successful. Fourth, the characteristics of effective schools are found in the behaviors and attitudes of their staffs, not in the size of their libraries or the age of the physical plant. Fifth, and overall, schools must assume responsibility for success and failure in student learning. All students are viewed as being capable of academic achievement regardless of their home environment, family income, ethnic identity, or sex. Pupils from poor families do not need a different curriculum; their poverty does not excuse failure to learn basic skills. Differences among schools do have an impact on student achievement, and those differences are controllable by the school staff.

It may be significant that the effective school movement described above coincides with an era in which the nation is increasingly reluctant to provide financial support for public schools. This

reluctance stems not only from the bleak economic situation but also from the widespread belief that schools are not turning out graduates who are sufficiently literate. The emphasis of the effective schools movement on literacy and numeracy skills addresses the image problem of public schooling without seeming to require major expenditures of additional funds.[8] As the introduction made clear, this movement also coincides with unequivocal criticism of the quality of that education. From either perspective, effective schools promise better education.

The popularity of effective schools literature is therefore unsurprising, as is the rush of schools and school districts around the country to create and implement effective schools projects.

Elsewhere we have expressed reservations about the research upon which the effective schools movement is based (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Among the weaknesses found in the literature are the following: the small size and narrowness of the studies' samples severely limits generalizability; only one of the studies (Rutter et al., 1979) was longitudinal, which prevents conclusions as to the staying power of effective schools over time; the studies, by and large, are correlational and thus beg the question of cause and effect, a problem exacerbated by their lack of a theoretical model; the relative and variable definition of effectiveness masks the fact that most of the "effective" inner city schools still have lower mean scores than do wealthier schools even within the same district; and the tendency of the studies' authors to compare exceptionally bad schools to exceptionally good schools (negative outliers vs. positive outliers) risks missing those features which differentiate the majority of average schools from both extremes.[9]

These criticisms which suggest that educators should approach school effectiveness prescriptions cautiously have failed to dampen state and local education agencies' enthusiasm for the effective schools movement. Yet that enthusiasm is not inappropriate. Although much basic research remains to be done, particularly research that corrects for the faults of the existing school effectiveness literature, the existing research "hangs together" sufficiently to lend confidence to school improvement efforts based on its conclusions.

First, there is a research net of reasonably similar conclusions about the defining features of a school culture that is conducive to academic success. Part of this reinforcing net comes from classroom research on teacher effectiveness, a body of literature that includes experimental studies and that is, in general, methodologically stronger than the school effectiveness literature per se (see, for example, Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Good & Grouws, 1979; see also, reviews by Brophy, 1983; Rosenshine, 1983). Second, research into educational innovation implementation and recent theories of school organization reinforce the role that can be played by school culture in school improvement (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Miles, 1981; Sarason, 1971; Weick, 1976). Third, literature from other sectors confirms many of the ideas embodied in prescriptions for change found in the most persuasive school effectiveness literature. In this regard, O'Toole (1981) stands out with his focus on the crucial impact of workplace culture and his recommendations for altering that culture. Fourth, the findings of effective schools' research square with common sense and with the experience of practitioners. While neither common sense nor experience guarantee correctness, they do

strengthen the case beyond the realm that can be reached by theory alone. Fifth, and finally, effective schools do exist. It is logical to assume, until research indicates otherwise, that the common characteristics of effective schools are likely to have some relationship to the cause of that effectiveness.

In the meantime, school improvement projects based upon that literature, flawed as it is, should be encouraged. Through the experiences of trying to turn around academically ineffective schools, researchers and practitioners can learn more about the nature of those variables that are associated with effective schools and can gain a clearer understanding of causality. More light will be shed on the subject than if a moratorium were placed on effective schools projects pending the development of a methodologically purer research base. Given that school improvement projects are in place, and are growing in number, the need now is for research that examines closely the process and content of effective schools projects.

Such a research agenda, and rationale, has an added advantage in that it does not require radical change to bring about better schools. Whereas vouchers or the elimination of collective bargaining necessitate the dismantling of the existing structure of public education, effective schools projects operate within that structure in a reformist manner. Effective schools theory does suggest that major modifications are necessary--modifications that go well beyond changing the reading series or adopting a new instructional technique--but those modifications can be accomplished within the public school system as it now exists.

In the rest of this paper we will describe the main conclusions of the effective schools research and discuss the school improvement theory

that flows from those conclusions. We will discuss the implications of this theory for school and district policy and analyze the major impediments to change at the building and district level. In a second paper, we will suggest state and federal policies that will promote school effectiveness in a manner that takes cognizance of the obstacles to change that are present at the school and district level.

School Effectiveness: What the Research Says

Previous research was unsuccessful in finding variables, easily manipulable by policy directives, that had demonstrable effect on student achievement. Input-output analyses of quantitative measures such as class size, cost of school buildings or equipment, or the presence of compensatory education programs failed to find school level characteristics that were significantly related to academic achievement (Averch et al., 1972; Coleman et al., 1966; Hanushek, 1981; Jencks et al., 1972; Mullin & Summers, 1981; Murnane, 1980).

The new school effectiveness research looks at different variables and often uses a different, more qualitative methodology to unearth them. Cohen (1983) argued that the new research departs from that of the recent past in a number of ways: (1) the study of classroom and school processes replaces investigations that focused upon static characteristics such as teacher salaries or the number of books in the library; (2) the orientation is toward describing school practices that, over time, have proven successful in raising achievement scores for low income and minority students; and (3) methodology shifted from large-scale surveys to in-depth observations and interviews in a smaller

number of schools. Though single school effectiveness studies are often marred by theoretical or methodological weaknesses, for the time being enough consensus is apparent, and sufficient corroborating data is available, to provide validation to the research findings presented in the school effectiveness literature.[10]

The most persuasive research suggests that student academic performance in strongly affected by the school culture (Brookover et al., 1979). This culture is composed of values, norms, and roles existing within institutionally distinct structures of governance, communication, educational practices and policies, and so on. Successful schools are found to have cultures that produce a climate or "ethos" conducive to teaching and learning (Rutter et al., 1979). As dynamic social systems (Brookover et al., 1979), school cultures will vary, in part in response to the composition of the staff and student body and to the environment in which the school exists, leaving each school with a unique climate or "personality" (see Halpin & Croft, 1963; Wynne, 1980; also Popkewitz, Tabachnick, & Wehlage, 1982). Nevertheless, academically effective schools are likely to possess a cluster of similar characteristics that encourage and promote student achievement.

The critical role played by school culture is supported by the literature on the implementation of educational innovation, recent theories of school organization, and a few studies of reform efforts in other institutions and workplaces. A synthesis of this research suggests that school effectiveness is <u>not</u> likely to result from a small number of discrete variables imposed on schools by external agents.[11] Rather, the organizational looseness of schools and the resulting

relative autonomy of teachers in the classroom indicate that school cohesiveness can best, and most lastingly, be obtained through building staff agreement on and commitment to clearly and commonly identified norms and goals (see, for example, Derr & Deal, 1979; Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Miles, 1981; Weick, 1976). At the same time, efforts to change schools have been most productive, and most enduring, when directed toward influencing the entire school culture via a strategy involving collaborative planning, shared decision making, and collegial work in an atmosphere friendly to experimentation and evaluation (see Leal et al., 1977; Hargrove et al., 1981; Little, 1981; McLaughlin, 1978).

O'Toole's (1981) study of workplace reform in industry and business supports, in a different context, the general points raised above. He found that a firm's culture, which is a product of its organizational structure ("system of actions") and its ideology ("system of beliefs") (p. 118), is the crucial element in explaining both quality and quantity of production and profit. Furthermore, he argues that it is "simply easier" to change the culture of an organization than the personality of the individuals who inhabit it (pp. 138-139). Change is brought about when the focus is on "systemic, total organizational change" (p. 66) that involves worker participation in all phases of a project and includes active support and commitment by top management. Monolithic "one best way" approaches produce "static" designs that are highly unlikely to change worker behavior or attitudes and will not generate the increased responsibility for work quantity and quality necessary for meaningful workplace reform (p. 55).

Without equating schools and factories, we find this approach congruent with what we described above. It would mean, for schools,

increased involvement of teachers and other staff members in decision making, expanded opportunities for collaborative planning, and flexible change strategies that can reflect the unique "personality" of each school. The goal is to change the school culture; the means requires staff members to assume responsibility for school improvement which, in turn, is predicated on their having the authority and support necessary to respond to the educational needs of their students and the programmatic demands of the school as an organization.

A Model for School Improvement

The notion of school culture and the idea of altering that culture may seem vague and diffuse (if not chimerical) to educators caught up in the daily exigencies of public schools. It is helpful, therefore, to suggest a model for creating an effective school. This model draws from the four literatures discussed in the preceding section. Specifically, it integrates the descriptive characteristics of effective schools with what we know about innovation implementation, organizational theory, and workplace reform elsewhere. We stress that the model is not a template; districts and schools must adapt it to fit local conditions. Also, the various factors listed below are likely to be interrelated and to have a cumulative effect. While schools may correctly choose to emphasize certain aspects of the model at any given time in the implementation process, the intent of the model is to offer a systematic approach to a comprehensive change strategy.

We have separated the characteristics of an effective school into two groups. The first group of nine can be more easily implemented,

often by administrative mandate. They set the context and provide the impetus for the second group of four. The second group defines the school's culture and leads to the development of the school climate. These four will evolve organically in each school within the context set by the first group. Over time the outcome will be a school culture and climate that supports and nourishes academic success.[12]

The nine variables in the first group are:

1. School-site management -- the staff of each building is given a considerable amount of autonomy in determining the exact means by which they address the problem of increasing academic performance.

2. Leadership -- through we are suspicious of the "Great Principal" theory, leadership from either the administration or group(s) of teachers is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process.

3. Staff stability -- frequent transfers are likely to retard, if not prevent, the growth of a coherent and ongoing school personality, especially in early phases of the change process.

4. Curriculum articulation and organization -- a planned, coordinated curriculum that increases the amount of time students spend studying basic skills and other academic disciplines is likely to be more productive than the cafeteria curriculum common in many schools today.

5. Staff development -- school-wide staff development is ongoing and links the expressed concerns of the staff to the school's specific instructional and organizational needs.

6. Parental involvement and support -- through the evidence is mixed, obtaining parent support is likely to positively influence student achievement, perhaps by increasing motivation.

7. School-wide recognition of academic success -- publicly honoring academic achievement and stressing its importance encourages students to adopt similar norms and values.

8. Maximized learning time -- more of the school day and more of the class period is devoted to active learning activities in academic areas; class periods are free from interruptions and disruptions.

9. District support -- fundamental change, building-level management, staff stability, and so on depend upon support from the district office.

The preceding variables, significant in their own right, set the stage for the four that follow. These four are:

10. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships -- change attempts are more successful when teachers and administrators work together; collegiality breaks down barriers between departments and among teachers and administrators, encourages the kind of intellectual sharing that can lead to consensus, and promotes feelings of unity and commonality among the staff.

11. Sense of community -- schools build feelings of community that contribute to reduced alienation and increased achievement.

12. Clear goals and high expectations commonly shared -- schools whose staff agree on their goals (e.g., academic achievement) and expectations (e.g., for work and achievement) are more likely to be successful in that they have channeled their energy and efforts toward a mutually agreed upon purpose.

13. Order and discipline -- the seriousness and purposefulness with which the school approaches its task are communicated by the order and discipline it maintains in its building and classrooms.

The model is not a blueprint to be slavishly followed. The weight of the evidence supports the contention that developing these variables maximizes a school's chances of successfully developing an effective school culture. However, there are insufficient data and too much diversity among schools, to be able to predict, for example, from whom leadership may come or the form it will take. Nor can the relative importance of any single factor be determined and generalized across schools. Collaboration may prove more significant in an inner-city low income elementary school than in a suburban upper income high school; curriculum articulation may be more influential in one high school than in another of similar location, size, and student body composition. The point here is that the model provides both means and the content, a process and a direction, for an effective schools project. Because it builds on what Miles (1981) called the "common properties" of schools, and because it synthesizes findings from four distinct literatures, it has power as a comprehensive model for school effectiveness. Adapted to the variety of schools in the land, the model provides a starting point and general guidelines to follow.

The Role of Shared Decision Making

Staff participation in decision making at the school level was not singled out as a characteristic of a successful school in the effective schools literature. It was identified as important in the research on

implementation and change. We argue, also, that it is integral to the process of creating an effective school culture.

Of necessity the rationale for this assertion is inductive since empirical data directly linking democratic governance in schools with higher student achievement are scarce. Only two of the effective schools studies identified shared decision making as contributing to student success (Spartz et al., 1977; California State Department of Education, 1980). This lack of evidence extends to literature outside that of the effective schools research (Duke, Showers, & Imber, 1980; Howe & McCarthy, 1982). Moreover, in contrast to the teacher's relative autonomy in the classroom (Bidwell, 1965; Dreeban, 1973; Lortie, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1978), staffs traditionally have not had the authority and opportunity to decide school-wide policy on management issues (Duke, Shower, & Imber, 1980).

Nevertheless, a considerable body of research supports the idea that genuine staff involvement in school-wide decision making is necessary for the development and implementation of the school improvement model described above. For example, having some degree of control over decisions that affect one's life is a defining feature of community (Newmann, 1981). Faculty (and student) responsibility for making school rules and determining penalties for their infringement was one of the major attributes of safe, orderly and well-disciplined schools (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978). Participative decision making has been found to contribute to effective staff development activities (Courter & Ward, 1983). Involving relevant parties in decision making has been associated with good leadership (Lipham, 1981). More tangentially, collaborative planning and

collegiality can certainly be facilitated by shared decision making, and it is difficult to imagine the emergence of common goals and expectations in the absence of a democratic process.

Research also suggests that teacher involvement in decision making is essential to the successful implementation of educational change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Elmore, 1978, 1979-80; Fullan, 1982). There are several reasons for this, including the contribution of participative management to the feelings of ownership and commitment deemed necessary for the lasting adoption of new educational ideology and techniques (see McLaughlin, 1978), and to the related feeling that the proposed innovation will work because it "fits" the local school and classroom environment.

In both schools and industry, shared decision making leads to increased job satisfaction (Duke, Showers, & Imber, 1980; Howes & McCarthy, undated; Lipham, 1981; O'Toole, 1981), which has obvious ramifications for the quality of life in schools regardless of its impact on student achievement, and teachers generally express dissatisfaction with their present level of participation in school decisions (Howes & McCarthy, 1982; Lipham; 1981). Finally, it is worth noting that in other sectors research <u>has</u> linked workplace democracy with increased productivity (O'Toole, 1981). Schools are not factories and education is not industrial production, but it is educational exceptionalism to assume that a characteristic so influential in one organizational setting would not have a positive impact in another.

Cultural change asks teachers to learn new ways of thinking and behaving and to acquire new skills and attitudes at the same time as it seeks structural or organizational changes. For this to happen, for

people to change, they must (ethically if not logically) be meaningfully involved in making the decisions concerning these changes.[13]

An Approach to Policy Development and General Recommendations

The effective schools research, and the model for school improvement discussed above, logically leads to a "backward mapping" approach to educational policy. Backward mapping (Elmore, 1979-1980) begins the policy-making process with an analysis of the organizational level that most directly provides the intended benefits or services. The key question in this analysis is what conditions at this level are in need of change to facilitate the delivery of that service or benefit? When the necessary changes have been determined the question then is, what resources are necessary, again at this level, so that the desired change can come about? The third question concerns the ability of adjacent layers in the organization to provide those resources and to influence the behavior of those at the delivery level. This question is then repeated at successive levels of the organizational structure. Underlying the process of backward mapping is the assumption that the only effective policies are those that succeed in actually altering behavior or structure at the delivery level, and that this alteration can best be accomplished by formulating policy from a bottom-up perspective.

Effective schools theory identifies the school building as the delivery level (as opposed to the district, the state department of education, etc.). This follows logically from the conclusion that

school culture, which varies from site to site, strongly affects overall student achievement. School improvement, therefore, consists of manipulating at the building level the network of characteristics that influence an individual school's culture. For this to happen the school must become the arena in which change takes place.

Goodlad (1983) argued that selecting the school as the locus for change can only be defended on "heuristic" grounds--empirical proof is lacking--but that, nevertheless, it provides a "working hypothesis" for educators (and policy makers). Some empirical evidence, however, is provided by Project RISE in Milwaukee (McCormack-Larkin & Kritek, 1982) and by California's School Improvement Program (Berman & Gjelten, with Izu, 1982). Both focused on the school as the unit of change and concentrated on implementing school-wide reforms designed ultimately to affect classroom instruction and student performance. Though a final accounting is not yet available, preliminary reports indicate that reading and math scores in RISE elementary schools increased substantially and that over 50 percent of SIP schools experienced general improvement in school quality while very few declined.

Additional support for viewing the school building as the locus for change comes from implementation research. Specific school level factors determine the outcomes of implementation efforts (see Fullan, 1982), while the interplay between the environment (the specific school) and the innovation (the specific change) shapes the end result in a process of mutual adaptation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977). These complementary findings suggest that the school as an oddity will intervene and affect the success or failure of school reforms.

Finally, loose-coupling theories of school organization also add to the case for the school as the unit of change (see March & Olsen, 1976; Weick, 1976; also Bidwell, 1965; Dornbush & Scott, 1975; Dreeban, 1973; Lortie, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1978). Essentially, loose-coupling theories suggest that district offices, state education departments, and federal agencies cannot exercise control over critical factors such as school climate or classroom processes. To the extent that this description is accurate then change, of necessity, must be focused at the school level. Changing teacher entrance requirements or lengthening the school day may leave the school culture untouched.[14]

In summation, congruent with the premise of backward mapping, conclusions drawn from the literature on effective schools, innovation implementation, and school organization suggest that the arena for school improvement is the school itself. Ultimately the goal is to affect teacher and student behavior and attitudes.

Thus the first general recommendation: The school is the focus of change; its culture, the ultimate policy target. Changes in other sectors such as the local education agency (LEA) or the state education agency (SEA) must be evaluated in light of their influences on the school and their impact on the culture and climate of the school.

If staff behavior and school organization are the initial policy focus of a cultural change strategy, then the three questions posed by a backward mapping approach become: (1) What staff behaviors and school characteristics must be changed to improve students' academic performance? (2) What will be necessary to make those changes (i.e., what are the required resources, incentives, structural alterations, and so forth)? (3) What influence can the central office and the school

board (the LEA), the state education department (SEA), and the federal government have on individual teachers and schools?

The variables in the effective schools model provide one answer to the first question. The first nine can be instituted, while the last four can serve as goals toward which schools move over time. Though the first nine characteristics are likely to facilitate the growth of the last four, their order of implementation is not invariably sequential. Clear goals and high expectations may take precedence over sense of community, and a school may reasonably decide to emphasize order and discipline before it tackles school-wide recognition of academic achievement. Nevertheless, the elements of an effective school culture are interrelated. School improvement efforts must eventually, if not always immediately, encompass the whole school. Isolated programs dealing only with one or two aspects of a school are unlikely to have much effect. Examples of this narrow approach include common forms of staff development that rely upon teaching new techniques to individual faculty members and large-scale programs such as Title I that affect schools in a piecemeal fashion.[15] Reforms that fragment the instructional program or that treat only one aspect of the school social system are likely to leave untouched the school's culture. They may also diminish teachers' sense of responsibility for what happens to the students and the school as a whole, since only certain parts of the school are diagnosed as needing improvement. Teachers disassociated from some aspects of the school have little incentive to assume responsibility for what happens in regard to them.[16]

Building on this answer, the second general policy recommendation is that staffs should analyze their school's conditions, using the

thirteen effective schools variables as a guide, and concentrate on those most likely to produce an effective school culture in their situation.

To accomplish and sustain cultural change, those most directly affected must be included in the planning and implementation process. Thus the answer to the second question raised by backward mapping concerns process. Collaboration, participation, and so on are essential to wholesale attempts at school improvement. But other resources are necessary for the process to flower. Release time may be a prerequisite to fostering collaboration and shared decision making at the beginning of a school improvement project. Subsequently, reasonably frequent opportunities for staff members to meet on school time, may promote a continuation of the improvement momentum. Other vital resources may include meaningful incentives for participation in staff development activities (Goodlad, 1983) and the provision of "expert guidance and assistance" (Courter & Ward, 1983, p. 193). Little (1981) pointed out that a supportive environment that encourages risk taking, innovation, and collegiality is a major aspect of successful staff development. This type of environment is a resource, though not a material one, that may be necessary to the process of school improvement. Finally, visible support from the district office, material and moral, is essential to the school improvement process. Teachers and principals are unlikely to put forth the effort required to change established patterns of practice and belief unless they feel recognized, supported, and rewarded by the district administration. While the emphasis is on the process of bringing the staff together for common work and decision making, without concrete aid such a process cannot be integrated into the school's life.

The third general policy recommendation, therefore, is that resources must be provided that will encourage and nurture the process of collaboration and participation necessary to change both people and structures in schools.

This policy recommendation implies the answer to the last question posed in backward-mapping analysis. If the key is cultural change at the school level, which rests upon staff members coming to "own" new ways of acting, thinking, and teaching, then the further the policy-making body is from the school, the less influence it is likely to have. As the civil rights legislation has shown, however, Washington can certainly intervene in a significant fashion in schools. More problematic is whether the federal government or the state government can shape the day-to-day within-classroom behaviors and attitudes of teachers and building administrators. While federal education policy has had mixed results (Kaestle & Smith, 1982), there is little evidence that it has managed to reform in an important way the nature of teaching or the assumptions of teachers. The same is true of state education policies though their impact can be more direct via such measures as teacher training requirements and entrance qualifications or competency tests. In Alaska (Blum & Hord, 1983), Connecticut (Fruchter, 1982), and California (Berman, Weiler, Czesak, Gjelten, & Izu, 1981), where the state education agencies initiated effective schools projects, the focus was on local school assessment, design, and management. At the very least this reflects a tacit, if not conscious, recognition that the ability of the state to directly develop an effective school is limited. Federal and state education agencies can create the conditions and provide stimuli for local districts and schools to assume responsibility

for program design and implementation. But the point here is that direct influence can most easily and productively come from the local level, from the district office and the school board; if for no other reason this is because the careers, and daily working conditions, of teachers and building administrators are subject more to local control than to state or federal control. In addition, as we have indicated above, the support of the local education establishment is crucial to fomenting and sustaining the sort of process-centered cultural change that can lead to better schools.

Therefore, the fourth general policy recommendation is that a pyramid approach to changing schools be adopted that maximizes local responsibility for school improvement.

The four policy recommendations made above can be viewed as guidelines for a coordinated, and more comprehensive, set of policies designed to instigate effective schools projects. We begin the discussion of those policies at the district level and examine the pertinent issues and obstacles. Occasionally we shift from the district to the school. While this shift may add complexity, it also permits a richer and more useful analysis of local effective schools policy making. We then move to the state and federal levels, suggesting separate policies for each as well as those that contribute to resolving the issues or reducing the obstacles faced at the local level.

School Responsibility and District Support

At the local level a number of policy issues must be resolved during the early stages of any effective schools project. While their

exact number and nature will undoubtedly vary from district to district, the following general issues are likely to be pandemic. If the school is the arena for change, how can district (and state or federal) policy stimulate the sort of bottom-up change necessary to the school improvement process? Can the same policies produce effective elementary and secondary schools?[17] Other issues, somewhat more subject to local variation, include: Who is to participate in decision making? What, specifically, is the role of the teachers' union or education association? What are the goals sought by the effective schools project? How and by what criteria will success or failure be determined? What is the role of staff development in an effective schools project? How can the school improvement process be institutionalized?

The necessity of preserving local flexibility prevents definitive common answers to any of the policy issues raised above. Though all districts will likely encounter the problems generated by these issues, each district must settle them in a manner dictated by the political and social contours of its particular educational landscape. Nevertheless, a framework can be drawn and policies suggested that can guide local school districts as they resolve these issues.[18]

The first policy issue to be addressed is rather a conundrum: How can top-down policy result in bottom-up planning and implementation? Stated another way, to the extent that individual schools do not voluntarily embark on an effectiveness project, how can the central office and school board get schools to assume responsibility for school improvement? At least three approaches are possible. One relies entirely upon incentives, provided by the district, to obtain school

cooperation. Districts could offer planning and implementation grants to schools that begin effective schools programs. To receive funds, a school would have to meet certain requirements, such as preparing a written school improvement plan, involving the entire faculty in the plan's development, and establishing a school effectiveness council to oversee the change process. Any school would be eligible for a minimum grant (substantial enough to be attractive), but schools with high proportions of poor or low-achieving students might receive money on a prorated basis. This is essentially the same mechanism employed at the state level by California's School Improvement Program (Berman, Weiler, Czesak, Gjelten, & Izu, 1981). Schools are given discretionary money contingent upon their submitting a plan that conforms to guidelines set by the state Department of Education. Note that money is only one possible incentive. Release time for planning and program development might be equally motivating and is necessary in any event. The provision of release time could convey to staff members that they are recognized as professionals, that they possess valuable experience and expertise, and that the district is willing to "buy" their time and energy. Purkey (Note 1), in a study of a major urban school district's effective schools project, found that lack of release time for the whole faculty to participate in school-wide planning had a detrimental impact on teacher enthusiasm and commitment to the change effort. While other incentives can be imagined, the point is that schools can be induced to accept responsibility for developing an effective schools project.

Another approach, the opposite of voluntary inducement, is more traditional. Adopting this method, the district would select schools, perhaps by student achievement scores, student body composition or a

combination of both, and demand that they develop an effective schools project. Schools might be held accountable for programmatic features (e.g., a school-wide emphasis on basic skills) and for process (e.g., parental input must be built into the school improvement plan). Consequences for failing to design and execute a viable plan could range from public criticism or low job performance evaluations to staff transfers or school closure.

Project RISE in Milwaukee represents, though not perfectly, this approach (see McCormack-Larkin & Kritek, 1983). Eighteen elementary schools scoring the lowest on achievement tests were singled out for inclusion into a school effectiveness program. The schools seem to have had some leeway to develop plans reflecting their assessment of their needs. However, a district established format for the school improvement plans and the imposition of specific achievement scores as the criterion for evaluation seem to have set fairly well defined parameters within which RISE took shape (see also Fruchter, 1983). Though it is unclear whether an "or else" was ever voiced, several RISE staff have indicated to us that participation was perceived as an alternative to closing the schools or transferring staff elsewhere. While a mandated approach may take other forms, the point here is that schools can be ordered to develop effective schools projects, and they are likely to cooperate to the extent that they feel the penalties for non-compliance are meaningful. The example of RISE suggests that even reluctant cooperation can eventually turn into willing participation if positive results occur.

Both approaches, however, have weaknesses that could prove troublesome if either were to become the sole policy for a district. An

exclusively incentive-based policy risks skipping over schools that still choose not to participate. Furthermore, there is some indication that ineffective elementary schools serving low-income students may be characteristically have staff members who are relatively more satisfied with the state of their school (see Brookover & Lezotte, 1979) or have low expectations for their students (see Brookover et al., 1979; Glenn, 1981; Armor et al., 1976; Venezky & Winfield, 1979), either of which would tend to discourage reform. Or, once the enthusiasm of the first year or so has faded and staff members have used up or come to expect the motivating incentives, schools could drop out of the school improvement process as long as it was a voluntary program. In some schools, dropping out could occur before progress was realized, and in others it might be at the expense of gains previously achieved. On the other hand, implementation literature and organizational theory suggest that a mandated approach is more problematic. Forcing people to change without providing them any choice diminishes their sense of responsibility and is not conducive to feelings of ownership and commitment. Also there is insufficient evidence to permit the assertion that a specific and imposed effective schools project will work as well in the more complex structure of a secondary school as it does, or seems to, in elementary schools. If the ultimate sanction behind the mandate is staff reassignment or school closure, the policy loses force when applied to more than a few schools within a district (all schools cannot be closed, nor all staff transferred). In some districts, the contract may preclude meaningful consequences from happening to even a few schools. Finally, both policy approaches are ethically vulnerable: the former because it could permit some schools to opt out of the reform

effort and the latter because it circumscribes the rights and responsibilities of the professional staff.

A third approach builds on the strengths of the previous two by simply blending them according to the circumstances of each district to arrive at a policy balanced somewhere between incentive-based and mandated. This combination increases the probability that reform will be attempted where it is needed and that staffs will cooperate. Such a policy mix is suggested by the literature on workplace reform in the private sector (O'Toole, 1981) and by experience with current school improvement projects (Eubanks & Levine, 1983). The operating assumptions are that the district administration can mandate school effectiveness projects (top-down) but that, once the directive has been issued, successful reform depends upon staffs taking responsibility for program design, implementation, and management (bottom-up). In practice, this might take a number of forms, the simplest being a district's mandating an effective schools project accompanied by policies intended to facilitate staff planning, decision making, collaboration, and so on.

The policy establishing the effective schools project could apply to all schools in the district or to only those schools meeting certain criteria having to do with student SES and achievement scores. Eubanks and Levine (1983) suggest using "neutral indicators" such as amount of Chapter I funding as the basis for school selection. Certainly that is an option that may be preferable in some situations. However, in other places beneficial pressure for change and increased accountability might be obtained by publicly identifying target schools by achievement scores, drop out rates, and the like.

Following the example of current school effectiveness projects, other features could be added to the generating policy. For example, it could be stipulated that there must be a written school improvement plan, that the scope of the plan must be school-wide and comprehensive, that the whole staff must have a genuine opportunity to contribute to the plan's development, and that the plan must contain measurable goals ratified by the staff. School-site management (one of the variables from the effective schools model) would be made district policy from the beginning. This reinforces the idea that the heart of school improvement is found at the building level. Vigorously endorsed by the board and the superintendent, an official policy of school-site management could provide a bulwark against middle level administrators whose "turf" is threatened by school-based reform.[19]

Incentives would then be used to demonstrate district support (another variable from the model). Some incentives, such as release time, can stimulate the growth of key characteristics such as collaboration and collegiality. Staff stability may motivate teachers in some schools and is also, by itself, one of the effective schools variables. Other incentives can be used to encourage school-wide staff development,[20] promote curriculum articulation, and foster the other characteristics of an effective school.

In sum, a balance between an incentive-based and a mandated school effectiveness project seems most workable. Though the example we use favors the mandated side, alternatives could be readily described. For example, the district could start the project on a volunteer basis, use the first wave of schools as models and provide incentives for all schools to participate. At some point target schools still not within

the fold could be brought in by administrative fiat. This might represent a more appropriate balance of mandate and incentive-based approaches in some locations. To reiterate a point made earlier, it is not possible, or desirable, to make a "one-best" policy prescription for effective schools. All that can be said for certain is that improving schools will take a tremendous amount of hard, sustained work by the district staff. An understanding of the implications of effective schools research must permeate the daily activities of central office and board of education personnel, while current and future policies and practices must be evaluated in light of what is known about school improvement. We have not attempted to provide a definitive answer but have tried to illustrate a number of possible means of using top-down policy to stimulate bottom-up change. Finally, we have devoted considerable space to the discussion because of our sense that the success or failure of an effective schools project lies first of all in its origins at the district level.

Effective Schools at the Secondary Level

A second issue has to do with the applicability of research grounded in elementary schools to the institutionally different world of secondary schools. Simply put, the question is whether the district policies derived from the effective schools literature can fit both elementary and secondary schools?

Secondary schools differ from elementary schools in at least three ways. First, secondary schools are organizationally more complex than elementary schools. Typically they are larger, having more students and

staff and consequently a bigger physical plant, and they have a broader curriculum with a multiplicity of goals transmitted through a departmental structure combined with student tracking (e.g., college preparatory, general education, vocational training). Second, to a considerable extent because of their organizational complexity, secondary schools are politically more complicated. There are several administrative layers including at least the principal, assistant principals, guidance counselors, and department heads. Individual variation aside, as subject-matter specialists teachers are less likely to share common educational methods and goals; depending upon the curriculum track in which they teach, teachers may also possess widely different expectations for student performance and achievement. Affiliation with the union or education association is likely to be stronger in secondary schools, and its members more assertive (Farrar, Neufeld, & Miles, 1983). Third, secondary school students differ from elementary students in ways that go beyond their being chronologically older, developmentally more advanced, or having more diverse educational and occupational objectives.[21] Secondary school pupils have established educational histories resulting in well formed attitudes toward schooling, student roles, and norms for work and behavior. In addition, their reference groups extend beyond school or family, and the culture of those groups may or may not be complementary to that of the school (see Apple, 1982; Ogbu, 1978; Willis, 1977). Therefore, they are likely to be less passive and more resistant to change than elementary school students.

Given that these often profound differences exist between the two levels of schooling, what are the implications for effective schools

policy?[22] One implication is that the project design must be sensitive to the dissimilarities between elementary and secondary schools. This suggests using a nonprescriptive model for school improvement similar to the one outlined earlier. That model is neither based solely on elementary school research nor is it a recipe to be followed without deviation. Its theoretical and empirical roots are in several literatures, only one of which is predominantly derived from elementary school studies (see Cohen, 1983; also Purkey & Smith, 1983). Its focus is on school-specific reform and on the need for the organic growth of the "cultural" characteristics of an effective school. It assumes that school improvement will be somewhat idiosyncratic. While it suggests specific factors to be implemented as part of the facilitating framework, it leaves room for schools to adapt each to the school's situation. For example, all schools in a district may benefit from an articulated curriculum as a general policy, but the precise form that curriculum takes will vary. Elementary schools may find it relatively easy to concentrate on literacy and numeracy skills and to arrive at common instructional technologies for specified groups of students. Comprehensive secondary schools, however, may choose to set up a core curriculum for all students (Adler, 1982; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and buttress it with sequential, but different, course offerings for students in the three educational tracks. Common instructional methods may not be desirable at the secondary level, but if they were might properly be determined by department (e.g., social studies and inquiry) or by student ability (e.g., remedial math and direct instruction). Another example is instructional leadership, one of the characteristics most often

associated with effective elementary schools (e.g., Armor et al., 1976; New York State Department of Education, 1974a, 1974b; Venezky & Winfield, 1979). Though district policy could single out the school principal as the designated instructional leader, leadership in general is more complicated in secondary schools. Firestone and Herriott (1982) compared elementary and secondary schools and suggested that leaders of "different kinds of schools have very different jobs to perform" (p. 11). Berman and Gjelten, with Izu (1982), concluded that "principals are important to improvement; but whereas principals may play the central role in elementary schools, others (such as department heads) may lead in secondary schools" (p. 22, emphasis in original).[23] (See also, California State Department of Education, 1980.) Furthermore, instructional leadership may be an unrealistic burden for secondary school principals, few of whom have the experience and expertise to supervise teaching in physics and home economics, physical education and Latin. Thus, at the secondary level, one district policy for school improvement might be to identify, develop and support leadership from a variety of sources or from whomever it comes.

In short, because secondary and elementary schools are not alike, district policies are best aimed at promoting school-specific solutions to educational and organizational problems. Policies that provide conduits, such as school-site management, can be coupled with policies that provide guidelines such as requiring an articulated curriculum. In all cases the point is to give every school, at each level of schooling, the leeway necessary to adapt research prescriptions to its institutional environment and clientle.

This brings up a second implication arising from differences between secondary and elementary schools. It has to do with implementing school reform and stems from the importance of process in school effectiveness projects. Farrar, Neufeld, and Miles (1983) describe effective schools programs as "process reforms" that "strive to capture the interest and imagination of school faculties, to revitalize those who are demoralized and to generate enthusiasm for joint work on common goals" (p. 11). They suggest that the characteristics of high schools discussed above may intervene in this process and create obstacles to the successful implementation of process factors such as those we have labeled collaborative planning and collegial relationships, sense of community, clear goals and high expectations commonly shared, and order and discipline. They cite no empirical evidence for this assertion, but interesting data can be found in the study of California's School Improvement Program (Berman & Gjelten, with Izu, 1982). This program, which emphasized the process of choosing a strategy for instructional improvement, was implemented more faithfully in elementary schools than in secondary schools, and even when implemented in secondary schools, was less likely to have a significant and positive impact on the school as an organization and on school-community relations. However, when implemented as envisioned, SIP was slightly more likely to result in student-centered improvement at the secondary level. Tentative as it is, this evidence confirms the idea that process reform is more complicated at the secondary level while at the same time it supports the belief that, in the area of student achievement, process reform is a powerful tool for school improvement.

Unfortunately, there are not sufficient studies of secondary school improvement programs to justify anything more than speculation as to what policies can best overcome barriers to the process of cultural change. Policies that maximize school-site responsibility and that offer real incentives to staff members seem likely to be helpful, probably necessary. Policies that avoid one-dimensional definitions of school effectiveness and that rely upon multiple measures of school success are more likely to conform to the complexity of secondary schools. Resources such as release time for planning and staff development may be even more critical for secondary schools, and, because they must deal with a more intricate organization, secondary school staffs may need greater amounts of coaching and technical assistance than elementary school staffs. All of this could be provided as a matter of district policy. Though school-wide change is the goal, secondary schools may be best approached incrementally through the departmental structure or via faculty interest groups (see Farrar, Neufeld, & Miles, 1983; Hargrove et al., 1981; Pfeffer, 1981; and Talbert, 1980). Without making it a district policy, local education agencies could encourage this approach by discussing it at seminars and training sessions in an attempt to increase the political and organizational skills of building leaders. Finally, the effective schools model presented in this paper addresses both the structure and the process of school improvement. For that reason, it is more likely to avoid the problems encountered at the secondary level by less comprehensive programs; unless and until practice indicates otherwise, following that model is likely to result in better schools at all levels.

A brief note must be added concerning the student body at the secondary level. Few effective schools studies mention any role to be played by students. For elementary schools this omission may be of little consequence, since young children are relatively malleable. Secondary school reform efforts that discount student perceptions of school life, while certainly not doomed, are raising the odds against their success. Rutter et al. (1979) believed that effective inner-city London high schools gave students the opportunity to take responsibility for school activities and care. Newmann (1981) argued that student participation in school governance was likely to reduce alienation and could logically lead to decreased student resistance, or more positively, increased cooperation. The Safe Schools Study (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978) recommended student membership on rule-making bodies for matters of order, safety and discipline. Furthermore, some literature exists that expounds upon the benefits to be gained by creating "democratic" schools that include students in the running and maintenance of the building (e.g., Mosher, 1978). Toward this end of securing student participation in the school improvement process at the secondary level, it could be district policy to include students on effective school committees, or to require schools to form ancillary structures for students. Our sense is that student participation can be a powerful contributing factor in most situations, though perhaps not absolutely necessary for a school effectiveness project to work.

The Role of the Teachers' Union and Middle Management

We believe that school improvement must ultimately become a cooperative endeavor including the district administration and the teachers' union.[24] Without this partnership many of the proposed changes in school structure and process will run afoul of contractual restrictions, possibly resulting in a truncated school improvement plan or an imposed plan that is resented, if not opposed, by the union.[25] Whichever occurred would be to the detriment of the effective schools project. Indeed, as the following examples will illustrate, creating effective schools may depend upon the ability of the teachers' union and the district administration to work together.

Staff stability is hypothesized as necessary to the growth of a coherent school personality, especially in the first years of a school improvement project. Stability can be undermined in many ways, but particularly by losing key teachers or by receiving an influx of transferred teachers. However, the district's need to reduce the teaching force (whether due to economic demands, enrollment decline, school reorganization, or some combination thereof) or the union's insistence on seniority "bumping" to protect other teachers' jobs may interfere with staff stability at a crucial moment in the change effort.

A touchier but related example has to do with matching teachers (and principals) with the desired school climate. While there is no evidence supporting the need for unanimity, and the diversity found in public schools mediates against enforcing lockstep conformity on staff members, it is readily apparent that incompetent, seriously disgruntled, or mismatched staff could hinder if not sabotage the development of a productive culture. Removing staff, however, is time consuming and is

often regarded as prohibitively difficult. Moreover, teachers' unions have historically not been open to remedies involving peer review or evaluation, while principals seem to have successfully avoided being held accountable for student achievement. If creating an effective school culture is to be facilitated, provisions must be made that permit putting together a reasonably complementary and competent staff. Without district and union cooperation this may not be possible.

Other complications can also arise. School-site management coupled with collaborative planning and shared decision making are the major mechanisms for insuring a close fit between the staff-identified school needs and tailored solutions to those problems; we have also argued that it contributes to staff acceptance of responsibility for change and for student outcomes. However, unions are likely to be reluctant partners in school improvement programs if it appears that the district is asking teachers to assume additional responsibility and do extra work without some form of compensation in return. Thus, strategies that ask teachers to meet for weekly planning sessions will be viewed with prejudice by union leaders and members. For example, at the 1983 AFT QUEST Conference union officials in one workshop castigated shared governance or school-based management. They criticized it as being a means of increasing the control of building administrators at the expense of teachers, an "end run" around the collective bargaining process, a tactic to weaken district-wide contract negotiations, and a gimmick that would distract teachers from classroom activities. Part of this criticism may be a defensive reaction to a new organizational structure that alters the relationship between teachers and administrators and, perhaps more importantly, between district or state union officials and

school chapters. To the extent that these fears become prevalent, or are realized, during an effective schools project union, and district cooperation is likely to break down. Nevertheless, even if these problems do not materialize and the union leadership remains unwilling to work with the district administration, then the probability of successful school change is reduced.

At the same time district administrators and principals have historically been reluctant to relinquish control over school programs (e.g., the structure of categorical programs such as Title I) or working conditions (e.g., whether daily lesson plans are mandatory). Unfortunately, versions of school effectiveness recipes may have unintentionally exacerbated this tendency at the building level by popularizing the image of the effective principal as the instructional leader, the captain of his/her school (earlier we referred to this as the Great Principal theory). At the district level we have already mentioned the jealousy with which the middle bureaucracy will guard its territory, but senior administrators and board members are not immune to jealousy and loss-of-control anxiety. If nothing else their official and public accountability, the political pressure to produce results, and the career benefits gained by appearing to take charge may outweigh the ideas of school-site management, staff decision making, and collaboration. Were this to happen and decision making was not decentralized, the credibility of the effective schools project could be affected and the entire school improvement effort could become suspect in the eyes of the building staffs. Here too a cooperative relationship between the district and the union is important. In this instance,

however, failure by the district administration to forge a genuine partnership with school staff members is the inhibiting factor.[26]

There is no simple solution, and a certain amount of conflict will always be present in the "contested terrain" (Edwards, 1979) that exists between management and labor (or between supervisors and the professionals they direct). Nevertheless to increase the odds that school improvement will become a partnership endeavor, district policies could be formulated toward that end.[27]

First, as a matter of policy districts could begin "principled negotiations" with the teachers' union (see Johnson 1982) on matters having to do with the effective schools project. (This call is aimed at teachers' unions as well. Principled negotiations cannot be accomplished by the district alone.) Principled negotiations, in the sense used here, is not mystical, intricate, or merely a slogan. It involves the clear recognition that school effectiveness is in the best interest of both parties. It would be signified by a demonstrated openness to input from the union and by a willingness to compromise, to try new avenues to change, and to abandon "business as usual" in dealing with the union.

For example, staff stability is undoubtedly in the interests of teachers (with provision for transfers for the truly discontent). To the extent that staff stability leads to a better school climate and hence to fewer teacher absences and so forth, it is also in the district's interest. And to the extent that it contributes to higher student achievement--which not incidentally would help restore the nation's confidence in public education, a prerequisite to maintaining, if not raising, the level of financial support to the schools--it is in

both their interests. Negotiated school improvement might therefore involve district guarantees insuring teachers' jobs in targeted schools or throughout the district for the duration of the effectiveness project or for a three- or four-year period. For its part the union might agree, in exchange, to accept substantial responsibility for teacher competence via participation in the development of methods of entrance testing and peer review.

Second, selected negotiated changes might be written into the collective bargaining agreement. This would serve two purposes: it would force the union and the district administration to discuss proposed innovations in school structure and process and reach some sort of agreement as to their nature and scope, and it would document the agreements reached giving either the union or the district administration an official record that could be used to monitor the effective schools project and could prevent its erosion over time (O'Toole, 1981). The dangers of incorporating some changes into the contract are that all proposed changes might be stuffed within its pages, that only changes found in the contract would be seen as valid, or that school improvement could be "held hostage" by disputes over economic issues. To avoid these pitfalls, and to preserve school level responsibility, only such items as school-site management, guidelines for release time, or staffing (see above) would appropriately be written into the contract.

Third and last, a union-administration partnership can be fostered by a policy that establishes a "union seat" on building school improvement committees and on oversight bodies created at the district level. For example, California's SIP contains the requirement that

participating schools have a School Site Council composed of parents, staff members and, in secondary schools,students (Berman, Weiler, Czesak, Gjelten, & Izu, 1981). A similar policy could engender the sort of broad-based participatory approach recommended throughout this paper. However, following New York City's SIP the policy could further stipulate that the union's chapter chairperson must be on the improvement committee (Clark & McCarthy, 1983). The union role could be extended to board advisory committees, central office planning teams, and so on.

A number of commentators have fingered collective bargaining as the culprit in the declining state of American education. In a recent article in Education Week (May 18, 1983, p. 18) Thomas Mooney, lawyer and sometime school board counsel, argued that collective bargaining will "impede efforts to improve our schools." He thinks that change must "be freed of the dead weight of union resistance," by excluding unions from the decision-making process in effective schools projects. We disagree. Though unions could play an obstructive role, cultural changes likely to create an effective school are more likely to result from a partnership between teachers' unions and district administrations. Though the cooperative road will not always be smooth it is our contention that fundamental school reform will be facilitated precisely by involving teacher's organizations, and recognizing their concerns in the decision making process.

The Role of the School Board and District Superintendent

In recommending policies designed to develop responsibility at the school level for educational improvement (e.g., school-site management, collaborative planning and shared decision making, principled negotiations with the union, and so on), we do not intend that the board of education or superintendent abdicate their responsibility. Democratization of the school structure is not predicated upon the abandonment of oversight by either body. Moreover, in the real and politicized world of public education boards of education and superintendents must respond to interests other than those expressed by school staffs. Parents' organizations, neighborhood associations, and minority groups, to name just a few, are likely to demand a voice in school improvement. Also the national interest in programs for bilingual students and for handicapped and other disadvantaged youth must also be represented.

Earlier we talked about achieving a balance between an imposed effective schools project and one that is voluntarily induced via incentives. Depending on district circumstances, projects would fall somewhere on a continuum between those two poles. We have also suggested policies that could be enforced throughout the district, such as a "union seat" on mandatory school improvement committees or placing parents, and students at the secondary level, on those committees.

More specifically, however, the role of the board of education and superintendent is to set the direction for the district's schools in a manner that blends local and state or national interests. This negotiated process would involve, in addition to the board and superintendent, relevant committees and advisory groups, the central

office staff, the teachers' union, and individual building staffs. [Unilateral action by the board or superintendent would usually not be conducive to the sort of bottom-up change advocated here.][28] In an effective schools project four key tasks would be performed by the board of education and the superintendent:

(1) They would determine guidelines that facilitated the process of school improvement. This might include establishing school improvement committees, providing release time for school-wide staff planning, or supporting school-site management. Staff development might be a useful vehicle by which the board could encourage the change process and could be used, depending on individual school preferences, to train building staff in methods of collaborative problem solving or familiarize them with the research on effective schools (more on this later). Overall, the intent would be to facilitate the development of an effective school culture by supporting conditions favorable to staff participation and responsibility at the school level.

(2) The board and superintendent would specify goals for the district's schools after getting input from school staffs, the teachers' union, parent and community groups, and so on. Goals for an effective schools project might range from new graduation requirements to reduced disparity in achievement between low income and upper income children of comparable ability. In practice, for example, the board and superintendent could insist that elementary students' reading scores be raised. The exact performance standard--whether a minimum score on a standardized test or some other criteria such as an increase of one grade level for every year of instruction (Glenn, 1981)--the time of assessment, and the curriculum would be negotiated. Each school's staff

would determine the instructional techniques and the implementation strategy for their school. Or, the board and superintendent could require a core curriculum for all students (see Adler, 1982; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Schools could expand course requirements, but a floor would be set below which schools could not go; course content and method could be negotiated with each school presenting a plan that makes sense in its context.

(3) The board and superintendent would hold central office administrators and school staffs accountable for designing and implementing a school improvement plan (though individual plans would be tailored to each school's needs) and for meeting the district's goals. Accountability is indispensible to a sustained and successful effective schools project. McCormack-Larkin and Kritek (1982) suggest that holding principals "accountable for results" (p. 21) was a key factor in the success of RISE. Since school staff may view effective schools projects with the attitude of "this too shall pass," accountability mechanisms may be necessary to convince them of the district's seriousness and commitment. Furthermore, holding school and central office personnel accountable for school improvement may serve as an on-going process in schools.

(4) Finally, the board and superintendent would prescribe a timeline for the project. The time framework could be negotiated, since schools will vary in the speed with which they can implement innovations and demonstrate change, but chronological milestones are likely to be necessary to forestall the possibility of schools moving too slowly or simply waiting for the project to pass. Perhaps more importantly, a reasonable negotiated timeline would be an antidote to the tendency to

expect immediate results. Changing a school's culture is a long-term process that is likely to take several years to accomplish. In many districts school boards and superintendents will be under considerable political and public pressure to resolve the educational crisis now. It will take a certain amount of courage for them to resist that pressure and to give schools the time necessary to enact fundamental reform. The existence of a clear timeline may help alleviate some of that pressure by giving the district a concrete schedule for school improvement that looks ahead several years.

In summation, though it is crucial to preserve building-level responsibility and maximize staff flexibility to respond to their particular environment, this is not at the expense of district oversight. Though we caution the board and superintendent against assuming too interventionalist a role in the sense of detailing the content and process of specific school improvement plans, they must play their part well if student achievement is to be raised. Specifically, this means that the board of education and superintendent would help create the conditions for the process of change, specify district goals, insure accountability, and set reasonable timelines for the effective schools project. Consultations with interested parties, especially those to be charged with implementation, such as the teachers' union and central office administrators, are strongly recommended. The expertise and experience of these groups is invaluable to setting policy for school improvement. While the board and superintendent may not always be able to satisfy all concerned, in a program for school renewal based on notions of collaboration and shared decision-making they could lead the way by acting in that manner themselves.

Choosing Goals at the School Level

So far the discussion has been concerned primarily with district-level factors. Within suggested general policy guidelines, specific district issues and policy alternatives have been explored. School-level policies have not been prescribed in part because of space limitations but mostly in order to emphasize the district role in beginning and shaping an effective schools project. This also reflects our view of school systems as "nested layers" (Purkey & Smith, 1983) in which actions at the higher layer can help determine conditions in lower layers. Ultimately, the idea is to alter teaching and learning in the classroom. For that to happen, district policies must facilitate the emergence of a school culture that is conducive not only to student achievement but also to things such as staff collaboration and self-appraisal leading to "staff owned" innovations.[29]

Before continuing with the discussion of district policy, however, a few brief comments on the topic of individual school goals are appropriate. While specific school improvement plans would incorporate district goals, the plans are also likely to differ in that they are drawn up by the staffs to address each school's situation. Nevertheless, it is a reasonable assumption that all schools in a district will need to choose school-specific goals and also will face the dilemma that may be posed by the relationship of goal clarity and staff consensus. Without attempting definitive answers, we point out this dilemma so that administrators will be aware of it and be better able to advise school staffs.

First, choosing building goals rests upon the initial assumption that what a school needs to do is dependent upon where it currently is.

Following O'Toole's (1981) advice to industry and business, schools might begin by conducting an analysis of the present school culture. While schools or districts can devise their own survey or observational instruments, there are several available that have been used in effective schools research or school improvement projects.[30] The intent is to provide the staff with a coherent portrait of the school as it is perceived by those within it. Involving the staff in the diagnostic process is likely to have beneficial consequences for their sense of commitment to and responsibility for the improvement plan based upon that analysis. This in turn suggests that even in districts that have mandated an effective schools project and that have told the schools to use a particular means to evaluate the school's existing culture the building staff be given responsiblity for conducting the analysis. As part of that analysis it is worth remembering that it may be unproductive to exhaustively examine specific problems as opposed to adopting a more wholistic perspective. The effective schools model assumes that whole-school change is preferable to change that involves isolated groups working on narrow parts of the school program. Thinking in terms of a single change, even one that affects the entire school (e.g., competency testing), may fragment the school's program or leave untouched the gestalt. For example, improving discipline by removing students from the hallways during class hours may solve only part of a larger problem having to do with an unsuitable curriculum, poor classroom management techniques, the absence of school spirit, and so on. Unless the other contributing problems are addressed clear halls are unlikely to translate into higher achievement.

However, attempting too great a change, too soon, may be as discouraging as trying too little. A study by Klausmeier, Serlin, and Zindler (1983) indicates that schools might helpfully focus on two or three key issues at a time. Common sense supports this idea and targeting on a few school problems or areas to begin with may be best in many schools. However, since comprehensive change is sought, the problem is to get building staffs to see the initial change as the start of an ongoing process leading toward a new culture that will sustain high student achievement. As schools begin their improvement projects, district administrators and school staffs will have to grapple with finding the optimal balance between goals that are too ambitious and those that are too timid.

The importance of goal clarity and consensus is no doubt obvious. Having an explicit goal facilitates its achievement: Knowing what is sought greatly increases the likelihood of selecting the best means of reaching that end; agreement on ends and means makes it more likely that the energy and efforts expended will be in complementary directions; and, working together harmoniously toward that end increases the likelihood of success. In short, a school that coalesces around a given goal, say academic excellence, and that shares assumptions on teaching and learning that are compatible with that goal, is likely to create a distinct and pervasive culture conducive to achieving that goal.

Unfortunately, realizing both goal clarity and consensus is not a simple task. Goals can be clear but there not be consensus; and there can be consensus without clarity. Moreover, clearly defined goals may be obtained at the expense of consensus: in the drive toward definitional sharpness, the ambiguity and vagueness that mask

differences among the staff are stripped away.[31] In that sense consensus may be easier if the goals are vague, but vague goals decrease efficiency and ultimately effectiveness.

The dilemma, however, varies somewhat in complexity depending upon the educational level. Secondary schools may need to sacrifice clarity to consensus, at least at the school level. The diversity of large, comprehensive high schools requires that school goals encompass vocational as well as college-bound students, academically oriented as well as affectively oriented teachers, and so on. Such a situation suggests that improving attendance, reducing in-school vandalism, and increasing school achievement may have to suffice as school goals at the outset of the improvement project. (Though the question of measuring school improvement, addressed below, forces some degree of specificity on even broadly conceived goals.) Bringing faculty and administrators together to discuss the issue of school goals may be the significant factor in any event, as the process can promote a shared language (Little, 1981) and can lead to collaborative work and collegial relations. While the debate over goals can exacerbate conflict and disunity, skilled leadership, over time, can create an atmosphere of cooperative work and cross-teacher dialog that in turn contributes to goal clarity and consensus. Within departments, however, greater specificity and unanimity may be possible within the parameters of the broader school goals. The math department may agree to emphasize problem solving and to use an adaptation of the Missouri Math technique (Good & Grouws, 1979) for teaching algorhithms. The shop department may decide to stress core industrial skills over specific job-related skills. The social studies department may stress the inquiry method or

decide to change its course structure to emphasize year-long sequences of semester courses. The point is that consensus around general goals at the school level can be supported by greater clarity on congruent goals at the departmental level. In combination they permit the growth of the climate and culture of an effective school.

Elementary schools, being smaller and having relatively limited curriculums, should be better able to resolve the tension that exists between clarity and consensus. Over time elementary schools should be able to forge unity around quite specific objectives. For example, elementary schools in Milwaukee's RISE program have managed to generate staff consensus around teaching basic skills using variations of direct instruction (see McCormack-Larkin & Kritek, 1982). Other elementary schools may choose to focus on other things--higher order thinking, social maturity or self-concept, etc.--but nevertheless it is likely that the obstacles facing elementary schools are not as great as those at the secondary level. Here too, however, the key to success is staff discussion and collaborative work on a school-wide basis, which is also facilitated by the fewer staff members involved.

In the end, absolute clarity and/or complete consensus is likely to elude most schools at both levels. The greater the clarity and the greater the consensus the more likely are the schools to be effective for all their students. Still, the process of working toward both may turn out to have the most impact pending the staff's ability to come up with perfectly defined goals upon which they are in total agreement. What is important is that the lack of absolute clarity and complete consensus not impede the process of working to improve the school.[32]

Evaluation

From a policy perspective the issue of evaluation cannot be separated from goal selection or status analysis. All three are interrelated to the extent that decisions made in one area have consequences in each of the other two. For example, a decision to concentrate on increasing the number of students passing the district's competency tests has also determined one of the criteria for judging the effectiveness of the effective schools project. Conversely, a decision to rely solely upon standardized test scores as outcome measures restricts the range of options for the project's goals. Either choice is likely to color the content (and use) of the instruments selected for the assessment of the school's current situation. Either choice will have a major impact on the nature of the effective schools project.

At the risk of stating the obvious, we note that some means of measuring change is necessary as evidence that schools have indeed advanced or to show where further improvement must take place. A baseline must be established to which schools can be periodically compared. While subjective indicators are not inappropriate, it is difficult to imagine goals that cannot be tapped by quantitative measures. Moreover, since quantitative analysis is relatively objective it gains validity and acceptability, particularly when viewed by parents, the media, politicians, and so on. Districts (and schools) may find it valuable to flesh out quantitative data with qualitative description, since the latter provides richer, more contextual information on school processes and climate. Nevertheless, hard, readily comparable data are likely to be seen as being both more

legitimate and as giving a more reliable picture of performance outcomes.

Standardized test scores are one type of data that can be used to guide and evaluate school effectiveness projects. Admittedly, standardized test scores do not provide comprehensive accounts of student learning, and they may unfairly represent the achievement of various subgroups within the school (see Madaus, Airasian, & Kellaghan, 1980). Their virtue, however, is that they permit comparison across groups and between schools, districts, and regions. Politically, the comparability of standardized test scores is of utmost importance. People naturally want to see how one school or group of children stacks up against similar schools or groups of children. Indeed, one rationale for an effective schools project is that a particular school or group of children lags behind other schools or other groups in learning a given body of knowledge. Though criterion-referenced tests are often more accurate measures of school-specific learning (Madaus et al., 1980), norm-referenced standardized tests have more credence with the public and most policy makers at the state or district level. Being able to show that a school scores lower than the recognized norm can help generate support for an improvement project. Being able to show that scores have risen two or three years down the road can be a powerful argument for continued support.

A word or two of caution, however, on the use of standardized test scores. While granting their political value the educational limits of standardized test scores must also be acknowledged. At best they give some indication of whether students have the skills necessary for success in school. Whether this translates into a job or a satisfying

life is highly questionable (Jencks et al., 1972; Olneck, 1979). Also, because standardized tests reflect learning that has occurred outside of the school as well as inside, more affluent students and schools are likely to score higher on such tests than less affluent students and schools. Moreover, by the nature of their construction, they discriminate among students.[33] Therefore, it may be unrealistic (educationally as well as politically) to expect and proclaim that an effective schools project will be successful only when it has raised the scores of low-income students or schools to the level of wealthier students and schools.[34]

Given the limitations of standardized test scores, districts (and schools) would be well advised to use multiple means of assessing school quality and change. This could include both criterion-referenced and standardized test scores, quality of school life scales (see Epstein, 1981); organizational climate scales (e.g., Halprin & Croft, 1963); measures of the classroom environment (e.g., Moos, 1979; Walberg, 1969); data on attendance, dropouts, and vandalism; and so on.

One objection to gathering and compiling baseline achievement data is that it is potentially embarrassing to the school and district. Certainly it is the type of information that is attractive to the media and can be misused by school critics. However, the literature on school effectiveness is explicit in the importance it attaches to accurate monitoring of student performance. District administrators and building staffs cannot be expected to make educationally sound decisions without full access to pertinent and meaningful data. Attempts to shield the school or district from critical publicity by suppressing quantitative data on student outcomes can only compound the problems faced by a

building staff trying to understand the causes and remedies for poor attendance, low test scores, and the like. Moreover, the availability of peformance data can be a political plus as well for it is a symbol of the seriousness with which the school effectiveness project is undertaken.

A second objection has to do with the use of quantitative data to evaluate individual teachers or administrators. Hard data can enhance accountability at the school or district level and thus promote effectiveness. However, using test scores alone to evaluate and compare individual teachers and administrators is likely to have a chilling effect. Without defending incompetence, the intent of school-wide change through collaboration and shared decision-making is to encourage people to cooperate in changing the instructional and organizational routines of the school. This is most likely to occur in an atmosphere that supports innovation and risk taking (see Little, 1981). Grading teachers and administrators is hardly conducive to such an environment.[35]

Involving teachers and the teachers' union in all stages of the school effectiveness project is likely to safeguard against the application of performance data on job evaluations. A more formal policy statement expressively excluding that possibility might contribute to a receptive attitude on the part of the building staff.

Finally, a practical problem likely to be encountered in many schools and districts is the late arrival of performance data at the school level. Building staffs can not chart a productive path to increased school achievement if data collected one semester does not come back to the school until the following year. District support is

crucial here. As a matter of policy the district would be wise to make whatever changes are necessary so that schools can have the information they need in time to use it for future planning.

In summation, hard quantifiable data, including standardized test scores, are necessary as measures of school improvement. Though they have less legitimacy outside of educational circles, more qualitative measures should also be considered. Because the outcome measures will strongly influence the nature of the effective schools project, it would be helpful for districts to negotiate the final measures to be used. Support from teachers, building administrators, and community members can be increased by consulting them on this matter. Finally, though district-wide measures are required, school change is also likely to be facilitated by provisions for building staffs to select additional outcome measures that reflect their priorities. Bottom-up change of the sort envisioned here is likely to be impossible without staff responsibility for choosing at least part of the means by which the improvement program will be evaluated.

Staff Development

Griffin (1983) has defined staff development as "any systematic attempt to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understandings of school persons toward an articulated end" (p. 2) An effective school differs from an ineffective school in its culture: whether it has an academic climate, a press toward student achievement and success, an atmosphere of ordered purposefulness, and so on. Since a culture is composed, in part, of "practices, beliefs, and understandings," school

improvement can be helpfully conceptualized as a process of staff development directed toward implanting in a school those characteristics associated with school effectiveness. However, whereas traditional staff development has tended to operate on a model of staff deficiency that assumes teachers and building administrators need some sort of remediation, the staff development model implied by the effective schools research assumes that school staffs can collaboratively identify and solve their schools' problems. The difference in approach is crucial, since staff development presented as a form of remediation is almost certainly going to foster resentment and resistance on the part of teachers and building administrators. Staff development that explicitly recognizes the experience and expertise of staff members and encourages them to work together to change their school is likely to be more favorably received.

The policy implication is that staff development should be based on the expressed needs of teachers as revealed in the process of analyzing school weaknesses (and strengths) and planning school-wide correctional strategies.

Effective elementary schools in the research literature conducted staff development activities that were school-wide rather than aimed at small segments of the staff and that were closely linked to the instructional program of the school (e.g., Armor et al., 1976; California State Department of Education, 1980; Glenn, 1981; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; see also Courter & Ward, 1983). At the secondary level the school-wide focus might be modified. Whole school inservices appropriately address issues such as school discipline, attendance and grading policies, school-wide recognition of academic success, and the

like--changes that require the cooperation and support of the entire faculty. A faculty decision to explore new instructional techniques may involve separate inservices for each department; a decision to modify classroom management practices may be best handled by dividing staff members according to grade level taught or curriculum track. Obviously characteristics of effective schools such as an articulated curriculum can be introduced via a combination of whole school and departmental programs. Tactical considerations, because of large staffs that preclude whole school meetings, indicate it would often be profitable to create more manageable groups representing a cross section of the school's staff or the various departments. The point, however, as expressed by Courter and Ward (1983) is that staff development in an effective schools project must be viewed as a "process that involves entire school staffs, including the site administrators, in an ongoing, high quality effort to achieve well understood and agreed upon goals for school improvement" (p. 208, emphasis in original).

District policies can be oriented to facilitate school-wide staff development in at least two ways. First, resources can be made available to schools on a demand or need basis. This includes providing information (e.g., data on student achievement, material on new teaching methods) and training (e.g., curriculum specialists from the central office, outside consultants and experts). While the district may continue to offer predetermined inservice packages, schools would be free to substitute programs of their own devising. Moreover, the goal of staff development at the district level would be to assist individual schools in obtaining information specific to building-identified concerns. Second, resources in the form of time and money can also be

used to encourage a "shift from the individualistic activities now prevalent, to site-based attack on school problems" (Goodlad, 1983, p. 45). Instead of a few teachers receiving inservice credit for attending a class at a local college, the entire school's staff would be offered credit for in-school workshops or for participating in collaborative improvement efforts. Release time would be provided for school-wide planning, and staff development funds could be used to compensate building staff for time spent in working together to improve the school.

The intent of both policy stances is to develop an environment in which the norm is that individual schools are responsible for their own staff development aimed at enhancing school effectiveness. Obstacles to this norm's emergence, however, are many. For example, inservice credits are not always attractive to personnel at the top of the pay scale since additional credits may not translate into increased pay. At the same time, districts may not be able to afford extensive inservice pay on a scale necessary for an ongoing school improvement project. Either lack of money or attendance restrictions may limit the amount of release time available to schools. Finally, the contract is likely to contain a number of strictures pertaining to staff development and inservice.

Schools and school districts will need to resolve these, and other, problems. The bargaining table is an obvious arena for this to take place. Pending that, the early involvement of teachers and building administrators in the school improvement project may help to defuse the situation and pave the way for compromise and accommodation. Without flexibility on both sides, collaborative school-specific staff development, let alone school improvement, is unlikely to happen.

Thoughts on Theory

The discussion of the issues and obstacles associated with an effective schools project makes it evident that a comprehensive and convincing theory encompassing implementation and school effectiveness is not yet available. Such a theory should be able to predict, for example, union or middle-level administrator resistance and prescribe remedies for that opposition; it should also be able to identify potential problems and their solutions that are not explored in this paper. Perhaps a unified theory cannot be expected at this point in time. The thinness of the research base on school effectiveness, the infancy of existing effective schools projects, and the small (almost non-existent) scholarly literature analyzing those projects, makes theoretical development risky if not premature. Furthermore, there is neither a general theory of innovation implementation nor a commonly accepted organizational model for schools. Fullan's (1982) state of the art review on implementation lists the factors that seem to affect implementation but stops short of building a theory using those factors. Though organized anarchy models are often used to describe schools as organizations, there is insufficient empirical evidence to support that contention or others (see Miles, 1981).

While this theoretical gap is distressing to some (e.g., Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983; Ralph & Fennessey, 1983), we find the situation less ominous. First, theory is not completely missing from the current discussions of school effectiveness. In this paper, for example, the model of an effective school can be seen as a beginning, and tentative, theory of school effectiveness. Further on in the paper the emphasis on staff collaboration and shared decision making is not simply a pragmatic

response to the oft-cited difficulty in getting school staff to assume ownership of proposed changes but is an attempt, however preliminary, at creating a theoretical stance toward managing schools. Second, even if the discussion has an ad hoc flavor it may serve to remind educators that, within limits, school effectiveness is highly contextual. It may be that an elegant theory based on the limited knowledge we now have would not be successful across all schools and would undermine staff efforts at developing their own methods of making their school work. Third, pending the considerable work and time necessary to combine existing theoretical strands with the lessons of school effectiveness projects, too quick an attempt at theory building might blind researchers and practitioners to alternative explanations (see Kuhn, 1962). For example, as noted above, elementary schools are often described as being organized anarchies (e.g., Davis & Stackhouse, 1983). In our view, a political power model (Pfeffer, 1981) may be more appropriate, particularly for secondary schools. Using this model obstacles to the school improvement process could be explained as resulting from changes (real or proposed) that threatened to alter the distribution of power within districts and schools. Interest groups and/or individuals would act to preserve, or enhance, their sphere of control while the loosely coupled nature of schools (Weick, 1976) diminishes the capability of administrators to override resistance. Other factors such as legitimized authority, staff social norms, and teachers' insistance on only adopting classroom innovations that seem practical and workable contribute to schools' institutionalized resistance to change. In such an environment a political strategy that

seeks to create coalitions in support of change and is based upon staff collaboration and shared decision making may be most appropriate.

Conclusion: Institutionalizing School Improvement

An effective schools project can be described as a process that over time leads to the implementation in schools of certain characteristics thought to be associated with optimal student performance. While increased academic achievement is the outcome of most interest, at least four other outcomes can be measured (Fullan, 1982). Of particular relevance to "long haul" attempts to alter a school's culture is the outcome variously referred to as "continuation" (Fullan, 1982), "routinzation" (Hage & Aiken, 1970), or "institutionalization" (Berman, 1981). All three represent the belief that school change cannot be considered truly successful unless the "innovations have become 'routine' and established parts of an organization's procedures" (Rosenblum & Louis, 1981, p. 223). Obviously an effective schools project could get staff members excited and students enthusiastic for one or two years before withering away to business as usual, as the Hawthorne Effect wears off (see O'Toole, 1981).[36] Therefore, some thought must be given to the problem of institutionalizing a school improvement program.

To some extent continuation is already incorporated within the idea, discussed previously, of the slow, organic development of collaborative planning, sense of community, common goals, and an orderly environment. That is, within a given framework (the first nine variables of the effective schools model), staffs begin a process of

collaborative work and shared decision making that culminates with their changing the way they think, their pedagogical practices, and even their educational values. Almost by definition these changes are continued since they must have been woven into the fabric of staff members' daily lives.

The chief barrier to continuation, therefore, would be any factor that disrupted or derailed cultural change. Among such obstacles--some of which have already been mentioned--are the following:[37]

(1) Implementation failure. Rosenblum and Louis (1981) found that the degree of implementation was highly related to routinization; the more completely projects were implemented the more likely they were to be sustained. Transferring this to school improvement programs, the more they depart from the bottom-up, participatory model, the less likely they are to be lasting. In light of the evidence on the difficulty of changing high schools, fidelity and completeness gain in importance. A mutated process that, perhaps, offers the illusion but not the reality of school-level responsibility is unlikely to continue once central office or board attention is focused elsewhere.

(2) Union opposition and administrative resistance. Concerted efforts by teachers' unions can hinder the development of staff collaboration, school-wide planning, and the like. School administrators and union officials can wage rear guard actions to block grass roots approaches to educational reform that threaten their authority or established patterns of organization (see O'Toole, 1981). Without principled negotiation, school improvement may not occur in many, if not most, school districts.

(3) Unclear or contradictory goals. School improvement is not a voyage of discovery but a process that leads to certain characteristics becoming implanted in schools and districts. The emphasis on process and the argument for school-specific planning should not be construed as an endorsement of vagarious methods or vague goals.

(4) Lack of central office and board of education support. Support, one of the elements of the effective schools model, ranges from material incentives to public recognition of staff contributions, and from holding schools accountable to granting them the authority and responsibility for designing and implementing their school improvement plans. Following the idea of nested layers (Purkey & Smith, 1983), the seriousness and purposefulness with which the district administration undertakes its tasks are likely to be transmitted to school staffs and on down.

(5) Lack of resources. Most schools will need additional time, money, and information if their staffs are to break old habits of instruction and management and to acquire new attitudes and expectations. Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that, when outside funding was exhausted, innovations were often discontinued. Assuming the analogy between outside funding and district-provided resource, withdrawing essential resources--such as release time for collaborative, school-wide planning--too quickly may abort the change process.

(6) Absence of shared decision making. Without a genuine voice in the decisions affecting their professional lives, building staffs are unlikely to accept responsibility for school improvement and student success. Research has linked shared decision making in schools to reduced alienation (Newmann, 1981), building safety (U.S. Department of

Health, Education and Welfare, 1978), effective staff development (Courter & Ward, 1983), increased job satisfaction (e.g., Duke, Showers, & Imber; Lipham, 1981), and greater productivity in industry (O'Toole, 1981). The role of shared decision making in successful implementation is considerable (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Elmore, 1978, 1979-80; Fullan, 1982). Excluding building staff from the decision making process is likely to greatly reduce the possibility of lasting school improvement.

District policies can be constructed in anticipation of the various factors that interfere with and impede the school improvement process. Since the bulk of this paper has dealt with an examination of policies intended to promote an effective schools project, we will not repeat that discussion. Districts should insure, however, that some sort of institutionalized fly wheel exists that can deal with the "decay of enthusiasm" (O'Toole, 1981) and generate continualization of the change process.[38] Examples of "fly wheel" mechanisms include: the contract (negotiated items written into it, monitored and re-negotiated at contract renewals); ongoing staff-development activities; a long-term relationship with outside experts/evaluators (charged with periodically revitalizing the project); incentives such as competitive grants (renewable every 2-3 years if schools reach agreed upon goals), or continued staff stability; and provisions for school and staff accountability. Whatever mechanism is used in a given district, its purpose remains the same: to perpetuate staff responsibility for working together on the educational problems facing their school.

In summary, within the parameters set by the four general policy recommendations, we have discussed district policies conducive to the

development of effective schools. We have also illuminated several of the problems likely to be encountered by districts (and schools) in the improvement process. Throughout we have tried not to offer rigid policies and not to suggest definitive solutions. That is in keeping with the need for flexible district and school-specific change programs, with the limitations of the effective schools research, and with the scarcity of research on actual school improvement projects. We believe, however, that using the recommendations in this paper as guidelines or as points of reference, school districts can initiate effective schools projects that are likely to meet with success. In the next volumn we take up the issue of state and federal policies for effective schools. Though both agencies have independent roles to fulfill, we will also attempt to suggest policies for each that dovetail with the district policies previously described.

Reference Notes

1. Purkey, S. C. School improvement: An analysis of an urban school district's effective schools project. Dissertation in preparation, 1983.

2. Personal communication with RISE staff.

3. Brookover, W. B. Elementary school learning assessment guide. Michigan State University. (undated)

Footnotes

[1]National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Education Commission of the States, Report and Recommendations of the National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth; College Board, Academic Preparation for College; Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal, Elementary and Secondary Education Policy.

[2]For example, see research reports and reviews by Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Hersh et al., 1981; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980; Rutter et al., 1979; etc. For a more complete list, see Purkey & Smith (1983).

[3]See Karweit, Nancy. Time on Task: A Research Review. Paper prepared for The National Commission on Excellence in Education, August 1982.

[4]For example, the BTES (Denham & Lieberman, 1980) glosses over the issue of what students learn and concentrates entirely on the amount of time, student success rate, and so on.

[5]The eight named states are: Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, and Pennsylvania.

[6]He cites New Jersey and California in addition to four from the list above. The cities are Milwaukee, New York, San Diego, and St. Louis.

[7]This includes Chicago (Eubanks & Levine, 1983) and, reportedly, in cities located in states as diverse as Oregon and Ohio.

[8]It is misleading, however, to interpret the fiscal restraint of effective schools as a promise that poor schools can become academically successful without any supplemental aid. See Fruchter (1982) for a

description of local school improvement efforts. Six of the ten district or state programs discussed provide for some additional funding of school improvement projects.

[9]See also MacKenzie, 1983; Rowan, Bossert, and Dwyer, 1983.

[10]See reviews by Austin, 1981; Clark et al., 1980; Cohen, 1983; Hersh et al., 1981; MacKenzie, 1983; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rutter, 1981; Tomlinson, 1980.

[11]See Edmonds, (1979a, 1979b, 1981), and Hersch, 1982, for examples of the tendency to present schools with lists of variables that are presumably to be adopted by administrative fiat.

[12]For a more complete discussion of these 13 variables, see Purkey and Smith, 1983, pp. 443-445.

[13]Faculty decision making is a cornerstone of California's School Improvement Program, which "requires a broad-based participatory planning process in which school staff and parents (and students in secondary schools) regularly review their schools' instructional programs, design and implement improvements, evaluate the results, and replan accordingly" (Berman, Weiler, Czesak, Gjelten, & Izu, 1981, p. iv). Preliminary findings indicate that this procedure has contributed to school improvement. Annecdotal evidence indicates that Milwaukee's RISE program also owes its success, in part, to the involvement of teachers in planning and implementation (Purkey, Note 2).

[14]The recommendation by the President's Commission on Excellence in Education to increase the number of courses students must take in science, mathematics, and so on is an example of this last point. While more math may benefit some students, particularly the college bound, forcing all students to take more math may simply drive marginal pupils

out of school. Lest we forget, the expansion of electives in the 1960s was a response to student alienation and high dropout rates.

[15]See Goodlad (1983) for a fuller discussion of the problems inherent in the individual teacher-centered mode of staff development as a means of school improvement. See Trisman et al. (1976) for an analysis of the impact of pullout programs, particularly their effect on teachers whose classrooms are disrupted and who "lose" certain groups of children from their classrooms for compensatory education.

[16]This sense of diminished responsibility may also result from the imposition of other piece meal education panaceas such as "teacher-proof curriculum" and scripted instructional technologies. Whatever the merit of such innovations, their prescriptiveness and particularly their dictated use may actually erode teachers' willingness to accept responsibility for student success. The academic developers blame teachers for not correctly using the package, and teachers blame the technique for being inappropriate, while the core of the problem may lie in an organizational structure that attempts to impose one best cure-all from the top down.

[17]See Purkey and Smith (1983) for a discussion of the narrow focus of the effective schools research. Note that of the major studies, only that of Rutter et al. (1979) examined high schools (which were situated in London, England). See Farrar, Neufeld and Miles (1983) for a discussion of the applicability of the research for secondary schools.

[18]None of these issues exist in isolation. The resolution of one will influence that of the others. We discuss them one at a time for the sake of convenience, even though it may imply to the casual reader that effective schools policies are a series of unconnected decisions.

That is not the case. We urge readers to keep in mind the interconnectedness of the issues.

[19]See O'Toole (1981) for a fuller discussion of the problem of middle management resistance when confronted by the prospect of workplace reform.

[20]See articles by Goodlad, Griffin, and Schlechty and Whitford in Griffin (Ed.), Staff Development, Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1983. Each article discusses the role of rewards and incentives in staff development.

[21]For a more extended discussion of adolescence and its impact on school effectiveness, see Presseisen, 1982.

[22]The category of secondary school encompasses middle schools and junior high schools as well as high schools. That these types of schools are not identical goes without saying. The rationale for lumping them together is that policies beneficial for both elementary schools and high schools are likely to also have a positive impact on middle schools and junior highs, their differences notwithstanding.

[23]Effective leadership style and role can also vary, even within schools of the same organizational level (see, for example, Brookover et al., 1979; Hargrove et al., 1981).

[24]Whatever differences exist among AFT, NEA, and independent locals are not germaine to this discussion. Indeed, there is some evidence that the extent of cooperation between the teachers' union and the district is not related to whether it is independent or an affiliate of the NEA or AFT (Johnson, 1982).

[25]Though our comments are directed at the relationship between the district administration (central office staff and the board of

education) and the teachers' union, similar disputes can arise between building administrators and the district. For example, Purkey (Note 1) notes that one district's attempt to use quantitative data (e.g., achievement test scores, attendance figures, drop out rates) to evaluate school progress was strongly resisted by principals who feared that it would be used to compare schools and would have an undue impact on their personal performance reports.

[26]Purkey (Note 1) found that within the central office a tension existed between the architects of the effective schools project, who advocated school-site management and staff decision making, and their administrative superiors (including the school board) who had their own agenda for the schools. For example, in planning a school improvement strategy one school voted not to have a closed campus during lunch hour. Not too long after, the central office issued a policy that required all schools to eventually have closed campuses.

[27]Teachers' unions need not wait for an invitation from the district. On the east coast the New Jersey Education Association has developed a training program for school effectiveness that is negotiated with school and district administrators, provided that 75 percent of the school's faculty agree to participate (Fruchter, 1982).

[28]See Weatherley & Lipsky (1978) who argue convincingly that the coping behaviors of "street level bureaucrats" (in the present case, central office and building administrators and teachers) are likely to frustrate the intentions of policies imposed upon them that do not square with the reality of their daily experience.

[29]See Little, 1981, for an interesting examination of the importance of school-wide norms of experimentation and self-criticism.

Without the presence of these two norms, staff collaboration, while still possible, is unlikely to lead to meaningful program development.

[30]See, for example, the Elementary School Learning Climate Assessment Guide (Brookover, Note 3) and the Connecticut School Effectiveness Interview (Villanova et al., 1981).

[31]Meyer and Rowan (1978) argue that schools risk losing social approval from the variety of interest groups in their community if they adopt detailed goals. According to them, schools gain support by being a little bit of everything, by seeming to embrace a multitude of goals. To the extent that schools, without community participation, focus on specific goals, they risk losing that community's support or the endorsement of various groups within that community. This too is an argument in favor of maintaining general goals at the school level.

There is also the problem of what to do if the community or board and the school staff disagree on the school's goals. We suggest that preventive medicine is best in this case. Involving the community at the beginning in determining the school's general goals is likely to reduce the potential for conflict and its severity should it occur. Of course the necessity of such a policy may well depend on the nature of the community in which the school is located.

[32]O'Toole (1981) urges industry and business to get on with the process of workplace reform and not to wait for everyone to agree with proposed changes. This pluralistic, as opposed to monolithic, approach recognizes that, within limits, dissent and disagreement can have healthy effects on an organization. This advice is particularly helpful for secondary schools, in which a measure of diversity may contribute to reaching the whole spectrum of students.

[33]It may even be that nationally used standardized tests are designed better to detect out-of-school than within-school effects of student experiences. The dual requirements of having to discriminate among students (to insure reliability) and to be applicable to schools with all sorts of different curricula (to aid sales) combine to reduce standardized tests' usefulness to assess educational change. (See Smith in Rivlin & Timpane, 1974.)

[34]Note that the most effective schools in the recent literature tend to fall below the city or state mean (Purkey & Smith, 1983). There is no evidence that any school-wide intervention strategy can totally compensate for the effects of poverty and related characteristics.

[35]Over time the ideal situation would be one in which teachers and administrators jointly engage in clinical supervision to upgrade teaching (and administrative) skills. Penultimately, existing contract provisions regarding supervision and evaluation would be maintained.

[36]Until longitudinal studies are carried out, the possibility remains that chance accounts for the observed success of "effective" schools or school improvement projects. More reliable and stable measures must also be devised before the lasting nature of school effectiveness can be determined (see Lowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983).

[37]Gross (1979) listed eight potential roadblocks in the path of educational change efforts: failure to correctly diagnose problems; failure to anticipate and resolve implementation issues; ad hoc approach to innovations; uncritical acceptance of innovations; absence of monitoring and feedback mechanisms; absence of community and teacher participation; inadequate planning; and absence of leadership.

[38]Without advocating continuous cultural revolution a' la Mao's China, it is worth noting that schools may often have to change more than once simply to keep pace with current levels of achievement. Demographic and social changes eventually will require many schools to undergo cultural shifts to meet the new needs of their students. Ideally, then, school improvement is an ongoing process in schools that allows them to respond to changes in the educational environment. Tomorrow's good schools are not petrified forests made from today's effective schools.

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